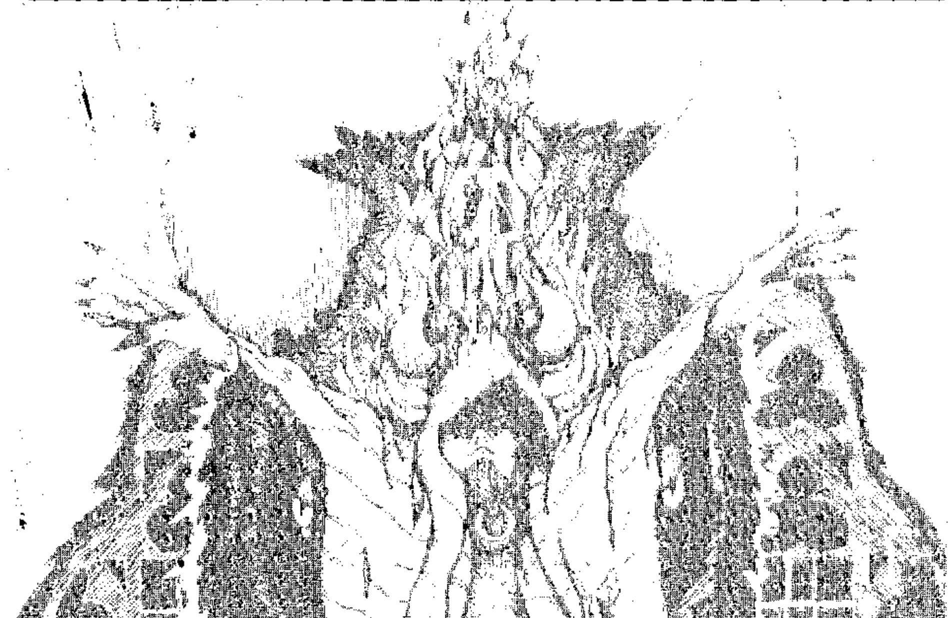
The DACE Desktop
An Information & Opinion Exchange Newsletter
June 1993 Issue IV.6



FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

EDITOR
Daniel A. Galant

COLUMNISTS
Mark Butler
John Dickerson
Daniel A. Galant
Jack Garrett
Larry Mangum

The DACE Desktop is the official newsletter of the Diablo valley Atari Computer Enthusiasts and permission is hereby granted for anyone wishing to use the content as long as the original source and author are given credit.

If you have any feedback, opinions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to contact the editor or one of the officers.

DACE is an informal association of Atari computer owners formed to further expand the potential of the Atari lines by exchanging information and mutual assistance.

DACE is a non-profit organization and not affiliated with Atari Corporation. We support all present and future Atari computers.

Membership is $30/year and entitles you to receive this newsletter, AtariUser, discounts on raffles, Disks Of the Month, and participation in our DACE Marque program.

For further information, please contact Daniel A. Galant at (510)689-8256.

The Editor Speaks

Well, here it is; Month two of the new newsletter format and the response has been wonderful. As a matter of fact, folks seem to like this new look so much, I've decided to become the official editor, (for now), to get it settled in.

Doing the newsletter in this style is actually easier than the old format, due mostly to the smaller page size. Information is more easily placed into the available space and therefore there is much less fooling around with text and graphical layout. Keep the comments coming and thanks.

I would like to take this chance to thank all those who have recently submitted material for publication. I actually have a slight backlog of material that I can draw from for future issues. This too makes the job of editor so much easier. Keep writing people, it's appreciated.

I am a little dissapointed (you knew it was coming) about the lack of response to either of the last two surveys we sent out. We received all of three responses to our listing questionaire and only one to the survey of what you would like to see on the Disk of the Month. Due to this lack of interest we are going forward with the membership listing and putting everyones name on it. You didn't object, so there it is. As for the DOMs, Larry and I will continue to put on them what interests us. Hope you like it as well.

I really hate to harp on the same old subjects, but until the message sinks in, I guess I'll continue to repeat myself.

Well, that should do it for this month. Till the next...

The President's Page

by Daniel A. Galant

Welcome to the June message. Let me start by saying a big thank you to Bob Brodie of Atari for coming out and speaking with us. Bob brought out a Falcon for all to see and answered hours of questions. I do wish there had been a far better turnout for this event. The showing we put forth was no less than pathetic and rather embarassing. Those who were there...I thank you.

I had seen the Falcon before at shows but this was the first chance I had to really look it over and ask some questions. It certainly appears to be a very nice little piece of computer hardware and the price is reasonable for what you're getting. let's just hope that it can sell and that Atari can and will supply the market with machines. Who knows, we might even pick up some new members if they do.

Alex over at ATY finally received his display Falcon and has it on hand for all to come in and play with. Do you have a piece of software you want to try on the Falcon? Take it to ATY and see how it performs.

The summer is going to be a fun one around the DACE household. For starters Bob Coleman has offered up his home for a summer cookout and swim. I think we'll take him up on it as soon as we work out the details. Look for more info in future newsletters. But to be in on the early scoop...come to the meetings!

Next there is the DACE writing contest. Get those stories in and remember—it only needs to contain the word ATARI. Prizes will be awarded and fun shall be had by all. The end of the year holiday auction is gathering some very nice offerings, so start earning those DACE Marques.

We also have the Art and Animation contest heading our way. Have you been busy at work? Time is ticking away.

It may be early to bring it up, but elections are not that far away. Have you thought what it might be like if you were in charge? Was there a topic you would have liked to see covered at a meeting or a guest you would have wanted to hear? Well put your hat in the race and consider running for a post. Nominations will be accepted as of the August meeting with the elections to be held in October. Get interested. Get involved.

I hope to see more of you at meetings during the next few months. We have so much to share with each other, why deprive us of your input. Till we talk again...happy computing.

ISHAR–Legend of the Fortress

by Larry Mangum

Ishar is one of the more recent Dungeon and Dragon games from Europe. It gives you a large continent to explore, four quests to solve and up to five characters to solve them with. Ishar has combined most elements of these games with magic to use, potions to mix, dungeons and a Maze or two to solve and of course Heroes and Warriors with monsters to fight.

You start out with one character, then have to recruit any others you want to travel with you. Many of these can be encountered in the taverns of the villages and cities you find along the way. But wait; Recruiter beware! Many of these characters desert as soon as you turn your back (go to sleep, that is.)

Other characters are encountered as you explore the continent. They tend to be a little more reliable, but still, some desert. One dwarf Wizard petitioned my party in a lonely piece of forest. He was gone with most of the money at the next village! You can consult a medical practitioner to find out how well your party relates (who hates whom!) for a modest sum of 1000 Gold!

Which brings me to my first real gripe about this game – money. Money is hard to come by, especially on the lower levels and you can only regain your strength by eating and sleeping. You can buy rations (they help keep up your physical strength so you can keep on fighting), but to regain life points or psychic points you must sleep – at a tavern for a good price – and the taverns keep getting more expensive the farther you go in the game.

The final indignity to this money problem is that it costs 1000 gold to save the game, thus leaving you with the interesting decision at first: sleep or save. There are a few teleport screens, one at first, more later that yield little Goblins to kill everytime that you step through them. Goblins with gold, not a lot of gold, but enough to get by if your careful. That is how you succeed at first, go through the teleport, kill Goblins, get a little gold, get a little experience etc. You recover strength and life points inefficiently on levels 1-3, but after that the eat–sleep mechanism works pretty well.

All of this ties you to the villages and later the two cities in the game. Complete a Quest; Gain a level; Need training; Are you hungry? You must journey all the way back to

Cont. pg 12

DACE Story Contest

by Mark Butler

Remember, the DACE Atari story contest is coming up. See the official details elsewhere in the newsletter but basically you just write a story with the word Atari in it, any length, any subject. Can't think of anything? How about these for ideas:

Sitting out on the hilltop you admire the beauty of the scenery around you. Although the day is cloudy and overcast the sheer magnificence of Nature washes over you and you sit down in front of your Atari Stacy to write the next great poem about a tree. As the words flow the clouds darken and finally a few drops start to fall, you hurry indoors but not until a drop falls onto the computer. Sliding down between the keys it begins its journey...

Climbing up the back side of Mount Sonora was the most difficult thing you have ever attempted. Finding a mountain that had never been attempted yet, selecting a route and training for it had been arduous. Yet here you are on the final climb to the top. Coming up over a ledge you stop in wonder. There sitting on the top of the mountain is a giant Atari logo carved out of solid rock. It appears to have been there for thousands of years. You spy what looks like a entrance at the bottom of the sign and head for it...

The thief had planned this job for weeks, checking the activities of the employees, their habits, the security systems, etc. Finally he was ready. Breaching the alarm system was easy, the physical perimeter was more difficult but eventually mastered. At last he picked the locks on the door and entered. Searching through the offices he began to have doubts. Where was all the money, everyone knew the President of Atari was loaded, but he could not find anything. Then he heard the barking of the dogs...

Climbing into the ruins of an ancient building, military under-sergeant Korf discovered a box that looked undamaged. Opening it he discovered a ancient computer with the word Atari on the front. Korf remembered stories about ancient artifacts in his mental conditioning classes, They had subversive messages in them, they tried to turn you from the true path, the path of the "leader". Still he was curious, he connected the power to his omni -belt, turned it on and saw...

Fred was sure his Atari had a life of its own. He could swear that it moved when he was not looking, By turning around fast he could al-

most see the keys jumping back into their proper places. Bending over to look closely he thought he saw one of the keys shift into position. Not too sure of himself he turned the power on and began to type. As his fingers touched the keys, small mouths ringed with teeth opened and the keys began to feed...

Police Detective Raul arrived at the scene of the murder within minutes. The chalk outline of the body was visible on the floor, also another outline was chalked—a square one. "What's that outline for," he asked. "The victims computer, an Atari, is missing also—we thought it might be important," was the reply. Raul looked around thoughtfully for a couple of minutes. "Why take the computer," he mused, "the disks are where the data resides". Then his eyes widened, "Unless...."

At the ad agency the bells clanged and the confetti flew. They had landed their first major account, a big computer manufacturer. When the excitement finally calmed down a little, Pier looked over the details and his smile disappeared. "Look at the budget for advertising Atari gave us, are they crazy"? he asked. "We can't do anything for this little". But his co-worked piped up, "Maybe we can, what if we..."

So there you have it, some story ideas. Hopefully these will spark something in your mind. But in any case—no excuses, submit an entry. If we get dozens we can have a newsletter special or perhaps a special DOM.

WEEN—The Prophecy

by Larry Mangum

On that day, evil omens were carried on the storm, the rumbling of the thunder seemed to predict the end of the Kingdom of the Blue Rocks. The approach of the Great Eclipse was the cause of the heavenly fury. Only three days remained before the moon would veil the Astral Light. But OHKRAM, my grandfather, braving the anger of the heavens, paid me a visit. The Kingdom of the Blue Rocks was in danger.

"As you know, WEEN, I'm a master Sorcerer and protector of our people, my powers formidable—until now. It was written that today I would lose those powers, for my great age has exhausted my force.

From now on our country is at the mercy of the powerful KRAAL. He is a sorcerer, the most ambitious, the greediest and the most dangerous of them all, because his thirst for vengence fires his hate. You were not yet born into this world when I defeated him and banished him from the Kingdom. Nobody knew where he'd hidden himself but through PETROY, my faithful friend, I have heard that KRAAL has learned of my weakness and plans to return to rule as a tyrannical master. I can no longer stand up against his hatred. Only you can do this WEEN, because you have a noble heart. Just as he was for me, KRALL will be your most fervent adversary. Only fear of the Prophesy keeps him at bay and out the Kingdom. It is written in the Prophecy: 'On the day of the Great Eclipse, three grains of sand will be placed in the REVUSS by the valiant-hearted and thus the enemy will be annihilated'.

Thus starts the game **Ween**. Once again you are thrown into a familiar situation, that of world savior. This will not be considered a difficult game but it has plenty going for it. The graphics, for instance, are very well done if a bit on the dark side. However, this could be a reflection on the gravity of the situation!

The screen format is the familiar three part separation, with the top being made up of the icons that control the game, the middle of the screen containing the game graphics and the bottom being reserved for textual use.

The icons, (six of them, including Disk management, Jokers ie. emergency clues, Notepad, Inventory, Characters, Movement which allows direct access to previous locations, and Adjustments that allow a change in fonts, music and the date) are hidden until you require them. They also will only highlight

the icons that are useful at that particular moment in the game.

The middle graphics part of the screen take up about sixty percent of the screen and you have to search every part of it! In this game anything you find can be picked up, you seem to have bottomless pockets and the game is very obliging in that it will not let you keep anything that you will not use.

The puzzles that make up **Ween** are not extremely difficult and they all can be considered rather logical. For instance, at the beginning you are limited to three rooms and are required to make a gold key in order to open a gold padlock. Once you find all of the ingredients to the puzzle it's easy enough to put it all together. Another example is even simpler, if you find some fruit, preferably strawberries, you will require the services of a fruit-eating vampire. This is not a fair representation of all of the puzzles because quite a number of them are much harder, but the point I'm trying to make is that you will not have to have a continuing frustrating effort to figure out a series of outre' and impossible clues. And it doesn't have magic spells or combat.

Happily, you are not alone in this endeavor. You have not only your two scatter-brained servants Ubi and Orbi who are more of a clumsy pain than a help but you have Petroy and Urm. Petroy is the Master Sorcerer's old friend who follows your adventures in his mind and communicates telepathically. This wise man who loves studying the magic arts, accompanies Ween's quest by deciphering ancient texts or messages written in unknown languages. And then there's Urm, a fruit eating vampire! He loves eating. Tamed by the Master Sorcerer, notably with the help of strawberries, he has remarkable magic powers but his greediness sometimes gets him into trouble. He faithfully replies to any summons from Ween.

This combination of great graphics, logical puzzles leading to the solution of the three Quests and easy to use mouse-driven interface makes this a very entertaining game. And no, I haven't solved it yet! In fact, if anybody knows how to get the Revuss to accept the three grains of sand please get in touch with me!

Spell Check?

Spellbound
by Pennye Harper

I have a spelling checker;
It came with my PC.
It plainly marks four my revue
Mistakes I cannot sea.
I've run this poem threw it;
I'm sure your pleased too no.
It's letter-perfect in it's weigh.
My checker tolled me sew.

I would like to thank Bob Coleman for bringing this wonderful piece of work to our attention. Those of you with spell checkers I'm sure will be able to relate to this little lyric. Those without can certainly appreciate it's symbolism.

By the way, Bob get DACE Marques for this. Don't you wish you had found it first?

Treasurer's Report

by John Dickerson

I wish to thank on behalf of the club's treasury the generous gifts donated to our raffle by Atari Corporation. We made $70, which is better than we've done for a long time!

Our balance stands at $939.88. We have recently taken steps to reduce our GEnie bill and newsletter expenses, and these will show results in the coming months. Our membership is up to 25, which is actually surprising considering the number of people who have recently moved to other platforms. Let's all hope the Falcon is sucessful and brings us more members.

Our meeting for June will feature the awsome 8-bit hardware of Sysop*Crazy, the owner of the Inside-the-8-bit West BBS in San Leandro at 510-895-8022. This BBS runs BBS Pro on a 1088K 130XE with 120+ megs of drive storage at 26,100 baud, all cleverly incorporated in a tower. Give his BBS a call before the meeting. He supports both 8-bit and ST.

DACE Notes

by Daniel A. Galant

Well, for those of you who didn't make the last meeting, and that was a good many of you, let me just say—You really blew it.

Bob brodie from Atari was there with Mike W. Lindsay, Editor for Atari Explorer magazine. The Falcon was also in attendance along with several handouts and some goodies, (which were raffled off and we'll tell you about in a moment).

Bob was very friendly, as always, and stood answering questions most of the night. As a matter of fact the meeting lasted till almost 11pm. Thanks Bob and Mike for coming out.

Along with the Falcon Bob brought an atari tote bag and a wonderful sweatshirt which were raffled off that night. I happened to win them both, (no, there was no fixing involved) but as I really wanted the sweatshirt, we raffled off the tote bag again and Bob Coleman ended up taking it home. There were also a few other items in the raffle, but as I was not taking notes at the time and since Jack, who usualyy does take the notes, wasn't there, I don't remember what else we raffled. Sorry.

All in all it was one of our better meetings and certainly a sign of things to come. Times are getting better and DACE will do just fine.

It was brought up that we might try to put on some sort of display at the local malls in order to show the community what the Atari computer is al about and what it can do. Bob mentioned that Atari itself has a mobile booth setup for just that type of event. He mentioned that it would be possible for us to use said booth if we were indeed to organize such a display. I feel that we should look into this type of event while the iron is hot. We continue to complain about the lack of Atari exposure to the public. Here's our chance to do something.

Keep believing and keep informed. Till next month...

Thought for the Month

Why do we drive on a parkway and park on a driveway?

Ishar cont.

your favourite village to eat, rest and stock up. This consumes an enormous amount of time, generating much of the play time in the game. Ishar can be fun, but the limiting factor of the money is frustrating, though luckily it eases quite a bit in the second half.

Ishar's continent is divided into two playing sections; Beginners, where you start in the west; And advanced to the South and East. These two segments are linked by a bridge guarded by a fierce Minotaur. You must kill him, you can't get around him. However, as with many other of the fiercest monsters he doesn't follow you or move. You can retreat, rearm, or recover, and come back for more. I don't think he heals between encounters either like the Dungeon Master monsters did.

Your character comes equipped with a map showing the continents, waterways, and forests, but with no names labeled to help you out. As you play the game and begin to understand the terrain the map makes more sense. It does give you bridges though not villages. You also have an orientation option that will list some of the surrounding lands or villages and their direction from you. This is a great help in deciphering the map. In the villages and cities there are shops and guilds. Guilds give you training, (for a price, a large price!) and this is the only way your stats increase. Life points go up with experience, but not anything else. Shops sell armour and potion ingredients which you will need in the advanced portion of the game in order to complete your quest. You can also encounter Jarels old companions who will help you out with a hint or two along the way. Good luck, great gaming and watch you purse!

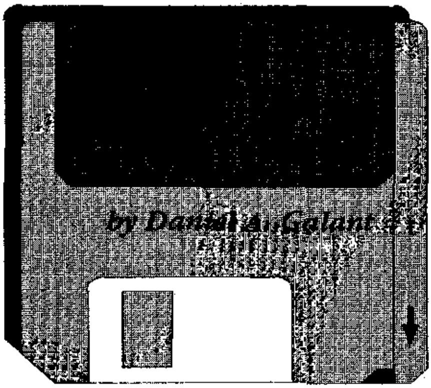
I did solve the game and kill the Evil Wizard, but to be fair I did it with the help of twenty-three pages of hints downloaded from one of my BBS's! Good by and God Bless...

Whats NekST...?!

Good queSTion. Our June meeting will be held at the Contra Costa Water District Building, 1331 Concord Ave. in Concord. We will meet in the main conference room on May 6th at 7:00pm. If you don't know how to get the CCWD bldg, call one of the numbers listed inside and ask for directions.

For a real change of pace, the June meeting will have an 8-bit focus. Sysop Crazy of the Inside-the-8-bit West BBS in San Leandro will be our guest and he'll be bringing his hardware to show off. It's truely interesting what can still be done with the 8-bit these days. If you thought the ol' *-bit was dead, come to the meeting and think again.

For those of you who don't think you have an interest in 8-bit happenings, we still have our raffle and DOMs to sell. But remember, you may just pick up something interesting anyway. You never know what you might learn.



June's ST disks will be both fun and useful. For starters we have a fully functional version of Write On, the little brother of that popular word processor That's Write. If you need a word processor for the writing contest, here it is. Also on the disk will be a spelling checker accessory, for those with word trouble.

Our game disk is a little space exploration and colonization game called Pegasus. Spread out through the galaxy while protecting your people from nasty invaders. This one fills two disks and Larry tells me is quite worth it.

The 8-bit disk will contain Card Stax, a Hypercard type multi media presentation program; VTEX, a text file viewer and Heavy Metal, for the gamer in you.

Don't miss out. They're worth the cash. And please...if there is something you would like to see on a future DOM, ask us. We'll keep an eye open.

This Newsletter is produced on an Atari TT030 using DMC Publishing's Calamus SL. Original printing is done with the Canon BJ-10e Printer, and reproduced by Kinko's Copies.

June 1993

S	M	T	W	Th	F	St
		1	2	3 General Meeting	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 Officers' Meeting	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

DACE Staff

President
Daniel A. Galant (510)689-8256

Vice-President
Larry Mangum (510)689-5160

Secretary
Jack Garrett (510)798-8466

Treasurer
John Dickerson (510)837-3783

Program Chairman
Daniel A. Galant (510)689-8256

Newsletter Editor
Daniel A. Galant (510)689-8256

8 Bit Disk Of Month
Larry Mangum (510)689-5160

16, 32 Bit Disk Of Month
Larry Mangum

The Paladin's Temple II(BBS)
Sysop: Draiden Bansted
300/1200/2400 baud (510)372-9039
Official DACE BBS located in Martinez.

The DACE Desktop

1618 Merian Dr.
Pleasant Hill, Ca, 94523

OAKLAND, CA
JUN 1
PM
1993
946



TO:

A.B.B.U.C.
Wieschenbeck 45
D-4352 Herten
W. Germany

POSTMASTER: Address Correction Is Requested.

A monthly publication of DACE the Diablo Valley Atari Computer Enthusiasts